

AGENDA ITEM: Statewide Information Databases – California Digital Library's Government Information Initiative

GENERAL OVERALL PROGRAM UPDATES:

CURRENT STATUS: The California State Library (CSL) and the University of California's California Digital Library (CDL) have signed an interagency agreement whereby CSL agrees to fund and CDL agrees to develop the *Counting California* database. This is the first phase of CDL's Government Information Initiative, a proposal to develop a methodology for acquiring and providing continuous and persistent access to government information available through California state agency Web sites, and to make this access available continuously to all Californians.

The first phase – the initial development of the database – has been completed and Library of California funds have been expended. The database prototype was released on January 19, 2001 for further testing. The general release is expected to occur in July 2001.

Because creating a robust data access tool demands the development and refinement of any number of processes, this prototype phase from January through June is a limited test release not meant to be accessible to the general public and not available from the public CDL Web pages. During this period CDL staff will incorporate what is learned from testing and feedback into further development of features and interface improvements. Also, during the prototype phase the database may not be available 7 days, 24 hours a day, and will not have all features operational.

Although the *Counting California* database will not be able to handle full public access during the prototype phase, CDL staff needs testing of the database and related feedback from beyond the UC library community. CSL staff has suggested, and CDL staff has agreed, that the following groups be encouraged to access *Counting California* during this prototype phase and to provide feedback:

- Library of California Board members
- Reference staff of the CLSA systems
- Appropriate California State Library staff
- A limited number of staff from school and special libraries

CSL staff has contacted these groups, asking for their assistance in the testing and evaluation of *Counting California*. The packet that was sent included a cover memo from CSL staff, a description of the purpose, goals, and contents of the database, a description of a sample session, evaluation information, and a copy of

the online user survey, all provided by CDL staff. CDL staff encourages comments and feedback, which will be accomplished via the online user survey and direct comments via e-mail, telephone, and mail. Exhibits A through C include the packet materials for the test evaluators.

Staff can arrange for a demonstration by CDL staff at the August Board meeting, if there is interest from Board members.

Relevant Committee: Support Services
Staff Liaison: Tom Andersen

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DATE: March 30, 2001

TO: Library of California Board
CLSA System Reference Coordinators
Library of California Regional Boards of Directors
California State Library: State Library Services and
California Research Bureaus
NCAL-LIB

FROM: Tom Andersen
CLSA Program Coordinator

SUBJ: *Counting California*

You are invited to test and comment on *Counting California*, a collaborative project funded by the Library of California and the California Digital Library, with additional funding provided from a Library Services and Technology grant administered by the California State Library.

Counting California, a database of statistical data produced by California and federal government agencies, is currently in its prototype phase and is expected to be publicly released in July 2001. It is designed to provide easy access and flexibility in locating and manipulating government statistics.

The Library of California and the California Digital Library have envisioned *Counting California* as an accessible and useful tool not just for the University of California academic community, but also for other academic, public, school, and special libraries as well as the general public. California Digital Library staff is anxious to receive feedback from all types of California libraries during this prototype phase as more functions and contents are added to the database. Changes will be made based on user feedback. *Please note: During this test phase, Counting California is not intended for use by the general public prior to its July 2001 release.*

Attached is information that includes the purpose, functions, and contents of *Counting California*, a sample session, and -- most important -- instructions about how to provide feedback and comments directly to the California Digital Library. Please share this with your colleagues and help construct and refine a tool designed to meet specific information needs of all types of libraries and California's diverse public. Thank you in advance for your time and comments.

Counting California:
<http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org>

Counting California online survey:
<http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org/survey/>



Counting California is...

a new initiative committed to enhancing California citizens' access to the growing range of social science and economic data produced by government agencies. In a departure from more static formats, *Counting California's* single interface enables users access to actual raw data compiled by federal, state, and local agencies, and also allows users to collate and integrate data by topic, geography, title, and provider. *Counting California* also addresses the serious preservation dilemma posed by ever-changing technology and data formats, insuring easy and continuous access to historical and current information. Available at: <http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org>

Counting California Partners:

Counting California is a collaborative project funded by the California Digital Library and the Library of California. A portion of the funding for Phase I of *Counting California* comes via special arrangement with the Library of California. This interagency agreement stipulates that the Library of California provide funding, and the CDL implement the project. Some of the funding for Phase II comes through a grant from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), administered by the California State Library.

Goals for Counting California:

The need for uninterrupted data access and the preservation of historical data are the two biggest problems facing government data distribution today. *Counting California's* goals respond directly to these challenges:

- To provide flexible, user-friendly access that meets the diverse needs of the California citizenry;
- To insure uniform, continuous access to both current and historical government data; and
- To foster the ability to share data and work collaboratively between government agencies and other members of the data community.

What titles are available in Counting California?

- **California Statistical Abstract, 1999:** a collection of information on social, economic, environmental, and physical aspects of the State.
- **Census of Population and Housing, 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (California):** personal, social, and economic characteristics of the California population and information on physical and financial characteristics of residential dwellings.
- **County Business Patterns, 1994-1997:** county-by-county information on businesses with one or more paid employees.

- **Historical Census Populations of Places, Towns and Cities in California, 1850-1990:** population totals for places, towns, and cities from each decennial US Census, 1850-1990.
- **Historical Census Populations of California State and Counties, 1850-1990:** population totals for the state and counties from each decennial US Census, 1850-1990.
- **Legal Immigration to California, 1990-1998:** information on persons from foreign countries who became a legal permanent resident of the United States.
- **Legal Immigration to California by County, 1990-1998:** information, by county, on persons from foreign countries who became a legal permanent resident of the United States.
- **Race/Ethnic Population Projections with Age and Sex Detail 1970-2040:** population projections by race/ethnicity, age, and gender.
- **USA Counties:** business, education, crime, election, demographic, and other information from a variety of government agencies.

How can users locate information in Counting California?

- **by Topic:** each of *Counting California's* individual data elements bears a topic heading of its own. As a result, users no longer need to know which agency created the data they seek, or even the exact title of the table that contains it. Users can look by topic either within an individual table or at Counting California's entire contents to get a broader perspective.
- **by Geography:** all of the data included in *Counting California* is geographically tagged, which means that whether users are looking at crime, economic, or education data, the information will always be associated with a specific geographic area. Much of the data is available at the state, county, or city level. Again, users have the option to focus on a single geographic area, or to choose data from a cluster of counties. Once a user has selected a geographic area, they can then explore further by topic.
- **by Title:** *Counting California* contains 10 unique datasets. Each can be accessed individually; for example, users may choose to select and browse by topic only within the contents of the California Statistical Abstract.
- **by Provider:** the data in *Counting California* comes from a variety of California state and federal agencies. Use this option if you know which agency produced a dataset that you are looking for.



Counting California

California Digital Library – Library of California
countingcalifornia.cdlib.org -- March 28, 2001

Counting California Sample Session:

To illustrate some of the functionality available in Counting California the following is a sample session that will lead you to information on ***school enrollment by cities in Yolo County***.

1. Go to the Counting California homepage: <http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org/>
2. Select "Explore Information by Topic" <http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org/topics.html>
3. Select "more" under the topic "Education" (<http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org/cgi-bin/subject?subid=9>) This will give you a complete list of sub-topics under the main education topic.
4. From the list select "School Enrollment and Attendance" (<http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org/cgi-bin/matrix?cnpid=173>).
5. Next a results screen will appear that lists the tables in Counting California that contain information on *school enrollment and attendance*. Note that the tables are from a variety of sources: California Statistical Abstract, USA Counties, and the Census of Population and Housing, 1990.
6. Select the table "School Enrollment Persons of Hispanic origin 3 years and over (P056)." You will be presented with a table from the Census of Population and Housing, 1990 that lists all of the counties alphabetically.
7. There are several links on the table that provide the ability to "drill down" by geography or variable. Select the label across the top that has "Enrolled in elementary or high school." A new table will come back that has the counties sorted by the variable from highest to lowest.
8. Down at the bottom of the table you have a couple of mapping options: 1. Map it -- will map the data as it appears in the table. 2. Map by persons, 3. Map by households, 3. Map by land area and 4. map by income. (We are still playing with the mapping function do determine what works best.)
9. Go back to the main table for "School Enrollment Persons of Hispanic origin 3 years and over (P056)" by hitting the back button on your browser.
10. Click on "Stanislaus County" You will now be presented with a table that lists the cities and census designated places in Stanislaus county.
11. Select the label across the top that has "Enrolled in elementary or high school". You will then be presented with a table that has a single variable for the cities within Stanislaus County
12. At the bottom of the page select "Chart it." You will be presented with a bar chart of the table.



Counting California

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How you can help us -- Please provide your comments and feedback!

Counting California is currently in the prototype phase and it will move into production for public release in July 2001. Over the next several months we will be making several changes, adding functionality, and adding contents to Counting California. We are making changes based on user feedback. Please help us make Counting California a success by providing us with your comments and feedback. The following are the methods that you can use to provide feedback:

1. User Survey – (available on the Counting California homepage: countingcalifornia.cdlib.org/survey/). Please fill out the survey to let us know what you like and don't like, what you find confusing, and how we can improve our site to help you. Please encourage your colleagues to complete the user survey.
2. By Email – you can always share your comments with me by email. Send your messages to Patricia.Cruse@ucop.edu, Project Manager for Counting California.
3. By Phone – I am happy to talk with anyone about Counting California. Please don't hesitate to phone Patricia Cruse at 510-987-9016.
4. By Mail – last, but not least you can send your comments by mail to:

Patricia Cruse
Counting California,
California Digital Library
300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-3550

Over the coming months the Counting California Project team will be conducting “user observations.” User observations are one hour, one-on-one sessions during which participants are given a set of tasks and observers watch (but do not intervene) as participants complete the tasks. In addition, each participant is encouraged to “think aloud” as they navigate through the site. If you would like to participate in the user observation sessions please let me know by phone or email. We will be happy to travel to your office to conduct the user observation.

Thanks for your help!



Counting California

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countingcalifornia.cdlib.org -- March 28, 2001

Counting California Survey

This survey is part of the Counting California evaluation program. We would like to assess the data discovery, data delivery and contents of Counting California. Your response will directly inform us of your experience with Counting California and demonstrate how we can improve the site.

1. What is your affiliation?

Information Provider or Library Staff

Student

Faculty

Government Employee

Other

2. When you look for social science statistics where do you usually look? Please list web sites or print resources that you regularly consult; for example, Census Bureau web page, U.S. Statistical Abstract, etc.

3. Did you find what you were looking for while using Counting California?

Yes

No

Additional comments:

4. Which “explore information” option did you find most useful?

By topic

By provider

By geography

By title

Additional comments:

5. Once you found the information that you were looking for, what would you like to do with it? (choose all that apply)

Print directly from the web

Download the information to a local machine

Email data to an email account

Save Results for future use

Other

6. If you would like to download the data to a local machine in what format would you prefer to receive the data?

ASCII text

Comma delimited

Excel/ Spreadsheet file

SAS/ Statistical Analysis file

Other

7. What problems did you encounter while using Counting California?

Encountered no problems

Difficult to determine where to start.

Difficult to identify which “Explore Information by” option to use

Difficult to understand data table labels

Difficult to determine the origin of the data

Unclear documentation and help

Charts, Map legends difficult to understand

Data not available

Errors

Other. Please explain.

8. What did you like about Counting California?
9. What did you like least about Counting California?
10. What content or subjects would you like to see added to Counting California?
11. What additional functionality would you like to see added to Counting California?
- Search
 - Data for smaller geographic areas
 - Graphing or charting more than one variable at a time
 - Compare variables
 - Download data into different formats

12. How would you describe your overall experience with Counting California?
- Very easy to use
 - Easy to use
 - Difficult to use
 - Very difficult to use

13. To whom would you recommend this site? (choose as many as apply)?
- Information provider or Library staff
 - k-12
 - undergraduates
 - graduate students
 - faculty
 - general public
 - government agency staff
 - business community
 - Other
 - Comments

14. Additional Comments: